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January 21, 1999

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Magalie R. Salas, Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 98-170 (Truth-in-Billing)
Ex Parte Presentation

Dear Ms. Salas:

On behalf of the Rural Cellular Association (RCA), we are submitting an original and one (1) copy of this letter to inform the Commission that on January 20, 1999, RCA representatives Jackie N. Dukes, Scott Parker, John McMillan, Marci Greenstein and Thomas Smith met with the following Commission staff members to discuss RCA's position on the issues raised in this proceeding, which are a matter of record before the Commission:

Mr. Steve Weingarten, Chief, Commercial Wireless Division;
Commissioner Susan Ness and Mr. Dan Connors; and
Ms. Karen Gulick of Commissioner Gloria Tristani's office.

In accordance with the ex parte rules, attached is a copy of the material provided to Commission participants during the meeting which summarizes RCA's position and presentation.

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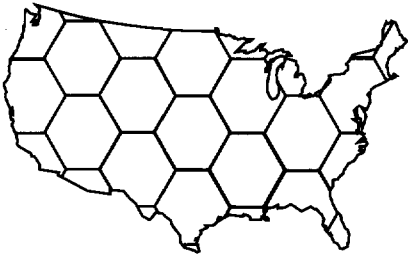
Should there be any questions concerning this matter, please contact this office.

Very truly yours,


Sylvia Lesse

SL/cvh
Attachments

cc (w/o attachments): Steve Weingarten (Chief, Commercial Wireless Division)
Commissioner Susan Ness and Dan Connors
Karen Gulick (Commissioner Tristani)



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TRUTH-IN-BILLING

The Federal Communications Commission is considering imposing additional billing responsibilities and specific billing format guidelines on carriers primarily to address abuses such as "slamming" (switching a customer's carrier without permission) and "cramming" (charging for unsolicited services) (CC Docket No. 98-170). The FCC's proposals would impose unnecessary burdens on small rural wireless carriers, the costs of which would be borne by their customers.

Small and rural wireless carriers provide a limited number of services, all of which are clearly spelled out in customers' bills. Typically, RCA members bill only for services they provide. Because RCA members typically do not bill for other local or long-distance providers, their service bills, regardless of format, will not uncover slamming. This was confirmed by the FCC in its recent "Slamming Order," (CC Docket 94-129, released December 23, 1998) which exempted Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) providers from carrier change verification rules precisely because they are non-equal access and therefore do not engage in slamming.

"Cramming" also is not an issue for the same reasons. Not surprisingly, RCA members' customers have not complained about slamming or cramming.

RCA POSITION

The FCC should exempt small, rural wireless carriers from its final billing format rules because they already clearly identify all categories of charges to their customers and they do not engage in slamming or cramming. As the FCC's Slamming Order recognizes, the FCC need not, nor should, impose regulatory safeguards on all categories of carriers.

The Commission should also refrain from requiring small and rural wireless carriers to provide information about complex universal service support mechanisms as part of their billing functions because it is so burdensome.

RCA is an association representing the interests of small and rural wireless licensees providing commercial services to subscribers throughout the nation. Its member companies provide service to predominantly rural areas where more than 6 million people reside. Formed in 1993 to address the distinctive issues facing rural cellular service providers, the membership of RCA currently includes rural PCS carriers as well.